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SUBJ: THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF THE SAHARA CRISIS ON US-SPANISH
MILITARY RELATIONS

SUMMARY: THE SAHARA CRISIS HAS GIVEN RENEWED CURRENCY IN SPAIN TO THE RATHER WIDELY HELD VIEW THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOWS PARTIALITY TO MOROCCO AT SPAIN'S EXPENSE. THIS VIEW IS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES AND THERE MOST NOTABLY IN THE ARMY, THE SERVICE WHICH DRAWS LEAST TANGIBLE BENEFIT FROM OUR BILATERAL MILITARY RELATIONS. TO SOME EXTENT, WE CAN WRITE OFF SUCH VIEWS AS AN INEVITABLE REFLECTION OF SPANISH SENSITIVITY AT LONG DEPENDENCE ON THE US, BUT THE IMMEDIATE ADVERSE IMPACT ON OUR DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP AT THIS SENSITIVE MOMENT OF POLITICAL TRANSITION--WHEN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN THE BALANCE--BEARS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. WE RECOMMEND, AS ONE PALLIATIVE, AN UPDATING SOON OF THE RATHER THOROUGH BRIEFING GIVEN THE SPANISH THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IN WASHINGTON AND HERE LAST WINTER ON OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO MOROCCO. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT PUBLIC CRITICISM BY THE GOS OF US POSTURE WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA CRISIS, THE LACK OF FRANKNESS AND EVEN AT TIMES AVAILABILITY OF KEY SPANISH OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE SAHARA--AND THE MORE DIRECTLY CRITICAL PRIVATE COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS FROM CABINET LEVEL ON DOWN--LEAVE RELATIVELY LITTLE TO THE IMAGINATION. THE SPANISH TELEVISION AND

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PRESS, TOO, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A WIDESPREAD SENTIMENT THAT US

POLICY FAVORS MOROCCO. OUR Milder CRITICS CHARGE THAT WE GAVE TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE IN THE UN, WHILE OUR ARMS SHIPMENTS TO MOROCCO CONTINUED AND OUR CONFIDENTIAL EFFORTS TO URGE MODERATION ON HASSAN LACKED VISIBLE EFFECT. OUR MORE VIGOROUS CRITICS CHARGE US WITH HAVING SECRETLY INSPIRED AND OPENLY SUPPORTED THE GREEN MARCH. AS A SYMBOL OF THIS WIDELY ACCEPTED VERSION OF EVENTS, NEWS PHOTOGRAPHS OF GREEN MARCHERS BEARING THE US FLAG-- PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IN SEVERAL SPANISH NEWSPAPERS AND ON TV, AND REFERRED TO BY SPANISH LEADERS IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH US--HAVE SERVED OUR CRITICS' PURPOSES.

2. PARTICULARLY FOR THE SPANISH ARMY, FOR WHOSE LEADERSHIP THE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR MOROCCO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DEEP-SEATED EMOTIONAL ISSUE, HASSAN'S GREEN MARCH HAS SERVED TO REOPEN OLD WOUNDS, EVEN TO THE POINT OF GIVING SOME CURRENCY IN ARMY CIRCLES TO THE SUGGESTION THAT THE US SUPPORTED THE MARCH. THE ARMY ATTACHE'S RELATIONS WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS AT THE ARMY MINISTRY HERE HAVE BEEN HEAVILY BURDENED FOR SOME TIME BY THE PERSONAL CRUSADE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE (ARAGON) TO PRESSURE THE US TO CUT THE LEVEL OF MILITARY COOPERATION WITH MOROCCO AND TO INFORM THE SPANISH ARMY OF THE DETAILS OF ALL DELIVERIES. (ARAGON CLAIMS THAT WHILE HE WAS SPANISH ARMY ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON, HE DEVELOPED AN INFORMATION NETWORK TO PROVIDE SPAIN WITH DATA ON ALL US SHIPMENTS TO MOROCCO. PRESUMABLY HE BEARS CONSIDERABLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRANSMITTAL TO THE ALGERIANS OF SPANISH INFORMATION ON US ARMS SHIPMENTS.) BOTH MAAG AND DAO HAVE OVER TIME HEARD LESS ON THIS FROM THE SPANISH AIR FORCE AND NAVY (ALTHOUGH OUR SLOWNESS IN RESPONDING TO THE SPANISH NAVY'S REQUEST OF NOV 7 FOR 105MM AMMUNITION WILL CERTAINLY NOT GO UNNOTICED). THE CONCERN FELT AT THE TOP OF THE SPANISH ARMY, HOWEVER, IS IN NO DOUBT AND HAS BEEN AMPLY REFLECTED IN THE RECENT EXPERIENCE OF OUR DEFENSE AND ARMY ATTACHES, POL/MIL COUNSELOR, AND IN THE AMBASSADOR'S OWN RECENT DISCUSSION WITH ARMY MINISTER COLOMA. IT IS THE SPANISH ARMY, OF COURSE, THAT HAS THE MOST TO LOSE IN THE SAHARA AND WHICH DRAWS THE LEAST TANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM THE US MILITARY PRESENCE HERE.

3. THIS EXPERIENCE RAISES IMMEDIATE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON OUR DEFENSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPAIN AS THE POLITICAL TRANSITION GETS UNDER WAY, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY ON
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THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS, NOW IN A TEMPORARY STATE OF LIMBO.

4. IN A SENSE, ANYTHING SEEN BY THE SPANISH MILITARY AS EVIDENCE OF A US FAILURE TO TAKE SPANISH INTERESTS FULLY INTO ACCOUNT HAS THE EFFECT OF STRENGTHENING OPPOSITION TO OUR CLOSE DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, SUCH A CONCLUSION MAY IN THIS CASE BE RATHER TOO FACILE. WE HAVE HAD AMPLE EVIDENCE, IN MORE THAN A YEAR OF EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE CONTINUATION OF OUR BASE

ARRANGEMENTS, OF THE CONSIDERABLE AMBIVALENCE INVOLVED FOR THE SPANISH IN JUGGLING THEIR DISTASTE FOR THE EXTENT OF DEPENDENCE ON US MILITARY AID AND THE OBVIOUS VALUE OUR GOOD WILL AND OUR PRESENCE HAVE HAD FOR THEM. IT HAS NOT BEEN SURPRISING TO WITNESS THE SPANISH MILITARY GIVING SUPPORT TO FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA IN THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS WHEN HE HAS INSISTED UPON A MORE EQUAL RELATIONSHIP AND SOUGHT TO CAST THE US MILITARY BASES IN SPAIN AS A TEMPORARY IF IMPORTANT EXPEDIENT.

5. IN THIS SENSE, THE SAHARA CRISIS, RATHER THAN SIMPLY HAVING CREATED A SPECIFIC NEW GRIEVANCE, HAS POINTED UP A CERTAIN BASIC FRAGILITY IN IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR MILITARY RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. THERE IS NO SINGLE CONCLUSIVE ACTION WHICH THE US COULD TAKE THAT WOULD EFFECTIVELY COMBAT THE CHARGE THAT THE US HAS BEEN EXPLOITATIVE IN ITS DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH SPAIN, BUT THERE IS VALUE IN MAKING WHAT EFFORTS WE CAN AT THIS TIME WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS: WHILE THERE IS NO FORMULA ASSURING SPANISH UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MOROCCAN MILITARY AID PROGRAM, WE DO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO UPDATE SOON FOR THE SPANISH THE RATHER EXTENSIVE BRIEFING GIVEN THEM IN WASHINGTON AND HERE IN MADRID LAST WINTER ON ARMS SHIPMENTS, PAST AND PROSPECTIVE. CERTAINLY, TO FAIL TO DO SO IN CONNECTION WITH ANY SIGNIFICANT NEW ADDITIONS TO THAT PROGRAM, SUCH AS A DECISION ON A DELIVERY SCHEDULE FOR F-5 AIRCRAFT, WOULD SIT VERY BADLY HERE. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO MAKE SURE THAT THE ALGERIAN GOVT UNDERSTANDS, MORE CLEARLY THAN IT APPARENTLY DOES FROM BRIEFINGS RECEIVED FROM THE SPANISH, THAT THE QUANTITIES AND DELIVERY SCHEDULES FOR MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT TO MOROCCO HAVE NOT BEEN SUCH AS TO CONTRIBUTE IN ANY IMPORTANT WAY TO ALTERATION OF THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE AREA.

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